In keeping you hooked up with interviews with up and coming artists, I"d like to introduce you to a real up and comer. Those in the NY , Jersey area probably have already heard of him; since he has been getting major local promps.

I"d like to introduce you to an east coast rapper from the New York / Jersey area. His name is Manuel Pimentel aka "Minus". Believe me Minus is a name that will become familiar to you in the future. I ran across him in a forum and decided to check him out and I must say - the dude can spit. It is good to see new talent and to hear "fresh" flows and beats. Not only can he spit, he does it all. From writing his own lyrics, to producing his own beats, and even designing the cover for his album. This is truly amazing that a talent like Minus could be out there and is not well known. Although Minus has been getting his promps being featured in major radio shows such as WBLS 107.5 FM During the Wendy William Time Slot, as well as college radio stations like 88.7 WRSU (A Rutgers University Station) numerous times, and continues to perform various venues in the Southern NJ Area, it makes you wonder why he is not well known to all of us.

I had a chance to ask Minus some questions and just get to know about him a lil more. After you read this interview, click HERE and visit his web site. You will be able to hear more of this young artist and to hear a lil bit of his upcoming album " Welcome To The Heights - The Album", due to drop this August.

Robert - Thanks for taking a little time to talk to us.

Minus - Oh thanks for having me and giving me this opportunity.

Robert - How long have you been in the rap game?

Minus - I have been rapping since before I even spoke English! Hell and even before then I was

always into poetry and such. It has been a long time developing and improving the whole character and sound I am trying to portray. I never really rushed it so I feel confident and strong about what I am presenting to the public now.

Robert - How did it start for you? Street battles and the like?

Minus - I always liked the spotlight to be honest. From what I remember my love for poetry and music culminated into one when I came to the United Stated and started learning about hip-hop. What really made me believe I could pursue this as a career was when I started battling a whole block on tracks and one by one they just kept dropping. It was so fun and easy I just remember wanting to do the next track and the next track.

Robert - What is your opinion of the Rap / Hip Hop scene today?

Minus -Everything is being way overdone in the genre, you got too much of the same things and a lot of it is becoming tired. The whole beef and battling thing in hip-hop has even been reduced to a form of publicity stunts instead of a form of competition and stepping the game up. This has always been the art form of many very, but it’s ridiculous now to a point. In the mist of every rapper trying to be the "hardest" and "gulliest" we now have every single track out there saying the same now, "I’ma kill you", and you can’t go further than that we have pushed it to the point where that is all we hear. The whole shoot em’ up bang crap is ridiculous, no one is trying to make story tracks no more, I can’t even listen to the radio most of the time, because it’s like how many times can you hear the same war story before you know what’s coming?

Robert - I know you believe in your music. Can you tell us why you think you have a shot in the industry?

Minus - I live for this, I mean literally I live for this. With me is not just music is the business and industry itself. A lot of rappers pride themselves in being ill with the punch-lines or hot with the flow and that is mostly where their careers end. I genuinely have a love for the business side of the music as well. I go out of my way to try to learn the names of entertainment lawyers, managers, engineers, the movers and shakers of the industry that are not just the front men of the game, but have a great deal to do on how it runs. Because of my interest for the business side of hip-hop I feel I am more of a multi-faceted businessman not just a rapper. From all the

rappers out there, which ones can say they do more for their careers than their managers do? Barely any if any at all. I have been offered management contracts and have passed on them solely because the managers have failed to show me they can do more for me than I am doing for myself, and in the hip-hop world perseverance goes a long way.

Robert - Your beats and flow are definitely refreshing. What do you think it's going to take to get Minus to a point where everyone looks and says "Where has this guy been?".

Minus - Thank you. A good marketing campaign, ha ha! I am trying to spread myself and my music as much as I can, but I feel it will take someone who sees my vision and believes in me to get me to the ears of those I am trying to reach.

Robert - I know you have been gettin your promps in the NY and Tha Jersey Area, but why do you think you have been so slow to be noticed?

Minus - I was doing a lot of music while growing up, but none of it was meant for public ears, the moves I was making back then were very small scale and I was not ready to chase this as a career. My first real demo was made in 1999-2000, and I only sent it to one record label with a home taken picture and a letter. I released a little mix-tape for "the block" in 2001-02, but even that was a poor attempt as I was just trying to put some music together, so I can't really blame anyone else for the time it took for me to get my stuff together, like I said I did not rush the issue. When I really got in gear and was ready to present what I had been working on, I started my site (March 2003), and started promoting hard, hitting radio stations, managers, A&R's and such. The acceptance has been overwhelming, so in this year I have had a lot of good things come from my hard work.

Robert - I must admit , I was not aware you were out there, but also I must admit "The Cadillac Song" really caught my ear. It is one of those tracks that ya can"t seem to shake after it's in there.

Minus - My friends and I were drunk one day, and I was playing some tracks of a beat CD that had been given to me by Outthere (producer of the Cadillac Song). When I got to the beat, I was twisted and I just stared mumbling out the chorus as I went, "something something something Cadillac, Dadda dada , holla back"… And my friends all said "Yo that's a hit" and I

was just mumbling, so I'm like let's make this then! And that's how it came about.

Robert - So "The Cadillac Song" is going to be the first single off your upcoming album?

Minus - Yeah, that's the one.

Robert - I listened to the snippets on your web site (www.minusp.com) of the upcoming album. Is this going to be a major drop, or just local?

Minus - It depends, I am not one to just stick to what I know, it's going to be on online retailers such as CDBabay.com etch, as well as my own site. So people could order it from anywhere and God knows I'm gonna be promoting everywhere. The local stores here and around the area like LOCO LOCO in NY are gonna' carry it, but I am still hoping for something a little bigger to go down by the time it's done in August.

Robert - Have you been able to work out a distribution deal for the album or are you doing that yourself?

Minus - As of now myself, but like I said I am still hoping for something to pop-off by August. When the CD is complete, I will work towards a distribution deal. I don't want to try to shop my CD with half the tracks on it and ideas, I want it to be something that can't be denied, something they can touch and feel.

Robert - It seems you have surrounded yourself with some good talent. Blackness and Denise (who sings the hook on The Cadillac Song) seem to be "a step above" the norm to. How long have you all been hooked up?

Minus - Black and Denise are cousins and I have known them for over 7 years. The way it was before it was Black, E.R. Mac and I in a group we called KIN (family). The problem was whenever we needed to record or get together to brainstorm I always found myself having to

push and carry the rest of the crew, to do stuff that I as an artist felt privileged to be doing. They are a very talented family, but I felt at the time, and still feel that dealing with them is something that slows me down rather than helps me up. As the name of the group implied we are family however, and having them featured in any work I do if their heart is in it will never be problem.

Robert - Can we expect to hear more from them also in the future?

Minus - Yeah no doubt. Black is a very talented MC and Denise could sing for days. As we speak actually I am writing a new track which I am planning to include her in for the album.

Robert - What other artist are you working with?

Minus - As far as guest spots on my album I am not planning to take it further than Black and Denise and maybe E.R. Mac, unless I can get some mid-to big names to drop in for a verse or two that is the extent of my collabs on the album. Production wise I am dealing with Outthere from KatKlaw productions (producer of the Cadillac Song), as well as my brother Y.A. who has put forth 2 beats for the album, the of course there is me. As far as outside collabos' with artists I have a whole list of people who I am trying to get with, I am trying to work something out with Cuban Link and The Cadillac Song is due to appear in the unsigned hype album by Mob Life Records who I am also hoping to work with.

Robert - I see you do alot of your own lyrics, beats and graphics work. Some of the beats I heard on the snippets are very original and tight. Do you like producing beats, or did that come from necessity?

Minus - I'm not as good a producer as I'd like to be so sometimes it is frustrating. It started out as a necessity, now I have beats, but every now and then I still find myself with a concept for a beat and I just end up running to the lab to put it down. Beats like "Down South Bounce" and "We here" are amongst my favorite ones I have produced; especially Down South Bounce that beat is just as crazy as the track.

Robert - Where have you been doing this recording? Do you have a studio or how you gettin

that end of it together?

Minus - I record at KatKlaw studios the studio of Outthere in Montclair, NJ. When I need to lay a track to see how it is coming out or how to make it work I have a home set-up I use to try to help minimize the actual time and money I spend at the studio.

Robert - - Is "Welcome To The Heights- The Album" finished, or is there still mixing and stuff to do , or is what ya have up on the site finialized?

Minus - The tracks are all written, but studio recorded I have about 9 out of the 15 I am trying to put up. I had some more tracks but I take advice into consideration as well and have scrapped two of the track I originally wanted to use. As time goes by I need to make the remaining half of the album more relevant to where I am right now rather than just generic music, so I am considering even writing some newer tracks and use them in the spots that I have scrapped.

Robert - What artist out there would you like to collaborate with?

Minus - NORE, Cuban Linx, Fat Joe on the big level. On the smaller scale with anyone who has as big of a passion for this as I do, so get on my site and get at me all you hungry MC’s haha!

Robert - So I can imagine you have been sending The Cadillac Song out for industry review, how is the feedback?

Minus - Oh man, almost too good! Because of how much everyone seems to like the track the rest of my music often goes by unnoticed. I love the track! But also I love all my tracks! So yeah its kind of a double edge sword, they tell me this track is such a hit and all that, but I don’t want to be known for just one track, or even one album, I want my whole career to be known, I want people to know all of me!

Robert - Well I know it caught my ear, But once I visited your site and heard some more I knew

that there was more hear than just one good track.

Minus - And I appreciate the comment more than any one "Yo I love this track" comment I have received. I pride myself on being an overall artist, and a very diverse one as well with many different talents, so to be appreciated for the whole feel of my music is better than to be appreciated for just one track.

Robert - Have you or do you have any plans to do or be on any mixtapes?

Minus - Yeh I am set to be part of MOB LIFE RECORD's Unsygned hype CD coming within the next few months (www.mobliferecords.net) , which will be a big deal they will have some big named artists on there. I am on RX's "Point Blank" mixtape released January 04, featuring Bone Crusher. And also I'm doing something with my man Stylce1 he is from upstate NY and is putting a project together. I will do any legit mixtape, so any DJ's out there on the grind can always approach me about it.

Robert - So what are you into now? Doing any show or recording?

Minus - Yeah man, 'Im recording a new track this week entitled "Call me". It is a story track about obsession that leads to… Well I rather not give it out, I'd rather ya'll check out the site in about 2 weeks I will have a preview ready. I am also performing the 20th at the Lavalanz in NJ. After that I was invited to perform in St. Louis with St. Louis Ponomo Entertainment Group, so I'm trying to see how I can get there to make it happen.

Robert - Any shout out's you want to share?

Minus - Big shout to the whole Washington Heights, 171st street crew. Blackness, John, E.R., Denise my brother Y.A. and everyone who supports me on the regular. Elijah from Mob Life Records, Armando "Outthere" Diaz from KatKlaw, Dave from Halftooth records, Fat Beats, Amani from St. Louis Ponomo Ent. Group, Max Jerome, and Big C Sensation, the whole 88.7 WPSC FM crew, everyone who supports the cause. SOHH.com, and big shout out to you for making this happen!

Robert - Well as August gets closer we will remind everyone of the drop. Will it be available on your site?

Minus - Yeh you will be able to get the CD through pay-pal on my site, and I will also have listed on there what stores and online retailers will carry it as well. Just so you know what you are getting, I will have a good number of tracks you can preview on the site, along with other works I have.

Robert - Well I want to thank you for taking time and letting us get to know you. We wish you the best and I am sure we will be hearing more of you in the future.

Minus - Oh I'm working on it, I am not stopping any time soon. Thanks for all the love and the support, every little bit of help does count and I appreciate all of it. So much love for everything.

Robert - Peace 1

Minus- Peace

*Click HERE to hear "The Cadillac Song".

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